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INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA-UAW

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STATEMENT OF XOCHITL LOPEZ

My name is Xochitl Lopez. I am an employee of the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, a job I came to through my work as an organizer for the Union when I was an academic student employee at California State University, Sacramento. Before I took on my current position I was the first elected President of UAW Local 4123, which represents CSU's academic student employees. I would like to speak briefly about my experience with the card check procedure as an organizer and activist.

In 2003 I contacted the UAW to see whether it was possible to form a union at my workplace. At the time I worked at the California State University as an Academic Student Employee. We organized 6000 workers statewide at CSU's 23 campuses through the card check process. It was a very successful and exciting campaign, and we now have a contract with rights and protections that we never previously had, including very good economic advancements.

I had a principal role as an organizer in this campaign. During the year that we were organizing before the union was recognized I personally spoke to around 1,000 to 2,000 people. A strong majority of the people we spoke with chose the UAW and collective bargaining, and we never had any revocations during the campaign.

Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington

I have also worked as an organizer on the continuing drive to organize the 6000 post-doctoral scholars at the University of California's campuses throughout the state through the card check process. I trained postdocs on how to get the Union's message across to their fellow employees.

During both drives, we used the one-to-one method of organizing in which we engaged workers in conversations about what they wanted from their work at the University, what the Union could do, and what our organizing campaign was all about. We answered many questions from workers about dues or about the organizing process or the meaning of an authorization card. Copies of the cards we used in the CSU and UC campaigns are attached to this statement.

When workers asked about the meaning of the card, we would make it clear that signing the card meant that they were choosing UAW to represent them in collective bargaining, and that when a majority of workers sign up, the majority is verified by the state labor board, and the bargaining process begins. We stressed that signing a card was all about winning recognition and beginning bargaining, since that was the theme of our campaign—what the Union could do if employees are united. We got a positive response to this message from the employees we talked to.

In both campaigns, our approach to employees' questions about how the details of the organizing process worked was very clear. When employees asked about dues we would let them know the amount and told them that the UAW never charged dues or fees until the first contract is ratified.

When asked about what specific issues the UAW was proposing to bargain over, we would let them know that bargaining demands would have to be ratified democratically by employees, and asked them what issues they thought were important at their workplace. When workers asked whether we were collecting cards to ask for an election, we explained that we were using them to win recognition and the right to bargain and that we did not plan to ask for an election, which would be a much slower process. We also advised employees who had questions that they could go to the Union's website, which spelled out the Union's policies and the card check process in detail. If employees were not sure whether they wanted to sign a card, we came back to discuss the issues with them more after they had had the chance to think about it and talk to their co-workers.

At CSU the campaign was a positive experience. Overall employees suffered very little pressure from their supervisors, and the process of organizing was relatively uncontentious.

That wasn't the case in my experience organizing post-doctoral employees at UC. There the University, the National Right To Work Committee and some anti-union employees began a campaign which was focused almost entirely on the mechanics of revoking cards, rather than the ways in which post-doctoral employees wanted to improve their terms and conditions of employment or what the Union could do for them in bargaining. The anti-UAW group also broadcast misinformation about the card-check process and the collection of dues. The result was to make employees reluctant to sign cards or even, in some cases, to discuss them. We even had cases in which employees who had never signed cards asked to revoke them.

That confusion also illustrates why allowing revocation makes even determining whether the Union has a majority impossible. The Union has to be able to determine when it demands recognition if it represents a majority. If employees could revoke a card without serving the revocation on the Union or revoke the card after the Union had already demanded recognition, then nothing would ever be certain. This would make what is supposed to be a straightforward process as uncertain and as litigious as an election. Ironically, even the University's and the Right to Work Foundation's websites advised employees to send their revocations to the Union.

The contrast between the two campaigns tells us that creating a complex system—or even a relatively simple one—for revocation has no place in a card check system: it creates confusion, rather than the opposite, it makes the process as contentious as a traditional organizing campaign leading up to an election would be, and it allows employers, even those who profess that they are neutral, to discourage employees from signing cards by creating the impression that signing a card is a risky act that they should reconsider—because their employer tells them they should. While our Union is confident that employees at UC and elsewhere will eventually be able to use the card check system without this sort of employer interference, they cannot do so if PERB allows for revocation of authorization cards.



☒ **Count Me In the Majority!**

Name: _____ Campus: _____

Home Address: _____
Street City Zip Code

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Mobile Phone: _____ Email: _____

Work Location(s): Building _____ Room _____ Other _____

Title: _____ How long have you been a Postdoc? _____

Check all that apply to the above title:

- ☐ I get a UC paycheck on a regular basis (e.g., monthly).
☐ I get paid by UC in a lump sum.
☐ I do not get a paycheck or lump sum payment from UC.

I authorize Postdoctoral Researchers Organize (PRO/UAW), International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America to represent me in collective bargaining.

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____
(Month / Day / Year)

UAW



☒ **Count Me In The Majority!**

Name: _____

Home Address: _____
Street City Zip Code

Home Phone: (____) _____ Work Phone: (____) _____

Mobile Phone: (____) _____ Email: _____

Su '03 Title (TA, GA, etc.): _____ F '03 Title (TA, GA, etc.): _____ W '04 Title (TA, GA, etc.): _____

Office Location: _____ Office Hours: _____

Dept. Enrolled: _____ Dept. Employed: _____

Course, Section, Lab Days/Times/Locations: _____

I authorize California Alliance of Academic Student Employees /UAW, International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America to represent me in collective bargaining. I further authorize my employer to release to CAASE/UAW all information necessary to fulfill its role as my collective bargaining representative and to release all information necessary to State and Federal agencies and to CAASE/UAW to enable CAASE/UAW and my employer to comply with Federal and State labor and employment laws

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____
(Month / Day / Year)

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